What we're doing in Maine

U.S. EPA | STORMWATER OUTREACH AT EPA NEW ENGLAND

STORMWATER *is a leading cause of poor water quality. Rain or melted snow runs down driveways, sidewalks and streets carrying oil, dirt and other pollutants into nearby waterways. Polluted runoff, which can cause erosion and flooding, runs into waterways and degrades plants, fish, shellfish and other wildlife. In water used for recreation, the runoff can lead to illness, and people who eat contaminated fish can also become sick. Untreated stormwater can also contaminate drinking water sources.*

INTRO:

The state of Maine administers its own stormwater management program, which includes National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. Maine's program, run by the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), sets permit requirements for construction sites disturbing more than one acre, industrial sites and some municipal sewer systems. Each municipal system with a permit must create a stormwater management program. In 2005, new state stormwater rules addressed four goals: effective pollutant removal, cooling of stormwater runoff, channel protection and flood control.

TO MANAGE STORMWATER IN MAINE WE ARE:

Building green buildings — Buildings throughout the state of Maine include features to minimize the damage of stormwater pollution:

- ***The Coffin Street dormitories at Bowdoin College in Brunswick*** include a rainwater system that traps rain in a large tank where it is purified by ultraviolet radiation and used for toilet water.

- ***A home on Cranberry Ridge Road in Freeport*** was built disturbing as little land around it as possible. Strict erosion control measures prevented pollution from running off to natural drainage paths and neighboring land and porous paving allows rainwater to penetrate into the ground instead of running along hard surfaces and picking up contaminants. Drought resistant plants eliminate the need for an irrigation system.

- ***The East End School in Portland*** is the first school in Maine to have a "green roof." The 1,800-square-foot green roof has soil and alpine plants that absorb and filter rainwater, provide insulation and extend the life of the roof.

Teaching farmers erosion control — The Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians received a $700,000 EPA grant that helped farmers reduce soil erosion and improve water quality in the Meduxnekeag watershed. The project led 33 farmers to put winter plantings on more than 13,000 acres. This kept about 4,000 tons of soil from eroding into the Meduxnekeag River.

Restoring Long Creek in Portland — Studies funded by EPA determined that Long Creek, which eventually flows into Casco Bay, was harmed not only by pollutants in stormwater but also by the volume of stormwater discharges occurring in the area of Long Creek. The impacts from both pollution and high volume were caused by excessive development in the area, including hotels, the Mall of Maine and office parks. As a result, EPA and DEP established new requirements for properties with one or more paved acres. Managers of these properties must now apply to the state for coverage as a group under a new watershed general stormwater permit or seek coverage under an individual permit. Coverage under the new general permit requires that each property take part in a management plan for the area. This management plan is designed to restore the stream at about half of what it would cost, were each property to receive an individual permit.

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